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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 000582

SIPDIS

CAIRO FOR MAXSTADT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/26/2013

TAGS: PGOV PREL KDEM PINR NI

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: HEADCOUNT OF POLITICALLY MOTIVATED

KILLINGS

Classified by Ambassador Howard F. Jeter. Reasons: 1.5 (B & D).

¶1. (SBU) Violence is an integral part of the Nigerian electoral scene. In recent weeks, the pace has picked up, with confirmed incidents of violence occurring in at least 24 of Nigeria's 36 states. The incidents range from rock-throwing at the motorcades of elected officials to midnight assassinations of key political figures. The political scene was rocked by the March 5 killing of the opposition ANPP supporter Marshall Harry in Abuja three days before he was to have launched the campaign for presidential candidate retired General Muhammadu Buhari in Rivers State.

¶2. (U) The following is a partial list of politically motivated murders and near misses over the last two years in Nigeria.

- Governor James Ibobi escaped from a gun battle between two factions of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) on February 4, 2001.
- Momoh Lawal, a relative of Umar Akaaba, former Chairman, Okene LGA in Kogi State, killed on March 5, 2001.
- Four killed in Abakaliki, Ebonyi State, when supporters of National Senate President Anyim Pius Anyim's clashed with those of Governor Sam Egwu's on August 24, 2001.
- Victor Nwankwo, younger brother of Arthur Nwankwo, founder, Eastern Mandate Union (EMU), murdered on August 29, 2001.
- Monday Ndor, Rivers State legislator, killed in Port Harcourt in August 2001.
- Odunayo Olagbaju, Osun State legislator, killed in Ile-Ife on December 21, 2001.
- Chief Bola Ige, Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, murdered on December 23, ¶2001.
- Janet Oladape, a PDP leader in Ondo State, clubbed to death on August 13, 2002.
- Alhaji Ahmed Pategi, Kwara State Chairman, PDP, murdered in Kogi State, on August 15, 2002. Kola Kasum, his predecessor, was killed earlier in the year.
- Barnabas Igwe, Chairman of the Nigeria Bar Association, and his wife, Abigail Igwe, murdered on September 1, 2002.
- Chimere Ikoku, former Vice Chancellor, University of Nigeria-Nsukka, killed in his residence in Enugu on October 20, 2002.
- Dele Arojo, PDP gubernatorial aspirant, killed by unknown assailants in Lagos on November 25, 2002.
- In December 2002, Alhaji Isyaku Muhammad, United Nigeria Peoples Party (UNPP) North-West vice chairman, was assassinated.
- One ANPP Chief killed in Ibadan, Oyo State capital in an intra-party clash, January 13, ¶2003.
- On February 8, 2003 Chief Ogbonnaya Uche, All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) senatorial candidate in Imo State, was assassinated.
- Mr. Theodore A. Agwato, Principal Secretary to the Governor of Imo State, killed in February 2003.
- On February 18, 2003, a security man in the residence of Paul Unongo, ANPP gubernatorial candidate in Benue State, was murdered by unknown gunmen while Unongo escaped.
- On February 20, 2003, PDP gubernatorial candidate in Kwara State, Bukola Saraki, escaped an assassination attempt.
- On February 23, 2003, the Speaker of the Borno State House

of Assembly, Inuwa Kubo, escaped an assassination attempt.  
- March 5, 2003, Dr. Marshal Harry, South-South ANPP vice-chairman, was murdered.  
- Mrs. Emily Omope, an Alliance for Democracy (AD) member, died on March 3, 2003 from wounds incurred in an acid attack in December 2002 by unknown persons.

¶3. (SBU) Unsurprisingly, most of these attacks have occurred in the southern part of the country. However, the few incidents in the North show that the potential for violence is not limited to a particular region of the country. The most recent trend is attacks on ANPP supporters who abandoned the ruling PDP to improve their electoral chances.  
Still, no party is immune to these attacks.

¶4. (C) Violence in Nigerian elections has been present since the country gained independence and will continue to make up a part of the political landscape for some time to come. However, violence in the past has usually involved confrontations between groups of thugs hired by contending politicians or their financial backers. The thugs and innocent bystanders have been the major victims. The difference this time is that a significant number of real political players have been attacked, engendering an acute and growing sense of insecurity among the political elites -- something that has not been observed in previous electoral cycles. We expect the pattern of attacks to continue through and after the elections as various politicians attempt to secure position and settle scores in a political process short on democratic input among the masses and long on potential financial gains for the victors.

JETER